

Palm Beach County Education Commission

2004 PARTNERSHIPS & COLLABORATIONS

Goal 1: Child Readiness

The Strategic Plan Challenge:

In our efforts to create a seamless education system, the Palm Beach County Education Commission will promote services for the care, support and education of children from birth and continuing through pre-kindergarten until a child enters the formal K-20 education system.

A major barrier to providing quality childcare and quality preschool experiences has been the lack of skilled workers. Lack of training, poor salaries, non-alignment of curriculum, lack of opportunity for career advancement and differing governmental regulations are the reasons most cited in finding qualified and skilled workers. In response to this need, local educational institutions, agencies and funders have come together to establish CD² (Career Development in Child Development). CD², a Toppel Family Foundation Initiative, brings together education institutions, Foundations, and community partners to develop and implement a career ladder for professionals working with our youngest children. This is a multi-year collaborative partnership.

Palm Beach County Education Commission in partnership with Children's Services Council, Family Central, Florida Atlantic University, Hispanic Human Resources, Lost Tree Foundation, Nova Southeastern University, Palm Beach Community College, Palm Beach County Head Start, Pew Public Education Fund, Prime Time, School District of Palm Beach County, Toppel Family Foundation, Urban League of Palm Beach County and private providers.

Goal 2: Improve Student Achievement and the Learning Environment

The Strategic Plan Challenge:

The Palm Beach County Education Commission seeks to improve the knowledge and skills of Palm Beach County's residents based on a supportive learning environment.

A. Recognizing that the quality of leadership in schools is a primary driver of school success, local leaders participated in the Darden/Curry Partnership for School Executive Leadership at the University of Virginia. The Partnership brings together the latest thinking from educational leadership and general management to focus on the business of education. Through its programs and case development, the Partnership provides executive education for K-12 educators in leadership, organizational change, managing and leveraging critical resources, facilitating partnerships and communicating with stakeholders, as well as other nonacademic issues facing school administrators. Through its community and business partners, the Partnership will broaden the understanding of the complex nature of the school organization and strengthen the relationship between executives and school district leaders. This is a multi-year collaborative partnership.

Palm Beach County Education Commission in partnership with Children's Services Council, Citrix Systems, Economic Council, Pew Public Education Fund, Principal's Association, School District of Palm Beach County, Urban League of Palm Beach County.

B. A Leadership Institute is being developed in support of the School District's efforts to improve principal, assistant principal and area superintendent leadership. Review of current research and best practices relating to educational leadership programs, site visits and focus group interviews with new and experienced principals are being used as the basis for the program design. It is intended that the professional development programs be appropriate to the developmental stages of a principal's career, with specialized training targeted to aspiring, novice and experienced principals. The Institute will be developed with an awareness of local university certification programs but will focus on student achievement and how to achieve it. This is a multi-year collaborative partnership.

Palm Beach County Education Commission in partnership with the Education Foundation of Palm Beach County, Pew Public Education Fund, Principal's Association, School District of Palm Beach County

C. A program has been implemented to train and certify displaced workers from Seimens Corporation and Motorola. Individuals complete the Intensive Summer Institute and earn 18 graduate credits at FAU. Following the summer coursework, the individuals receive a new teacher orientation. They are placed as math and science teachers in Palm Beach County secondary schools with an experienced educator as a mentor. In addition to this professional support, the teacher/candidate attends a weekly graduate seminar. Upon completion of this closely supervised teaching semester, it is expected that the teacher candidates will pass the required certification exam and be eligible for teacher certification. It is a perfect win-win situation: Teachers highly skilled in the content area and jobs for displaced workers. This is a multi-year collaborative partnership.

Palm Beach County Education Commission in partnership with Florida Atlantic University, School District of Palm Beach County, and Workforce Alliance.

D. The School District successfully achieved charter status in January 2003. The expectation is to identify and implement more efficient and effective ways to manage operations and deliver instruction to students to improve student achievement for all students. The initial waivers resulted in a significant savings in construction costs at replacement schools. Additionally, the district was able to avoid losing operational funds by changing reporting deadline dates. Additional waivers are pending with the State Board. This is a multi-year collaborative partnership.

Palm Beach County Education Commission in partnership with the School District of Palm Beach County.

E. Distance Learning is a tool used to increase student access, provide flexibility, promote integration of technology in the learning environment and promote globalization of education. A consortium of local educational institutions distance learning professionals in being developed to coordinate and leverage the local resources. This is a multi-year collaborative partnership.

Palm Beach County Education Commission in partnership with Bell South, Florida Atlantic University, Palm Beach Community College and the School District of Palm Beach County.

Goal 3: Skilled Workforce

The Strategic Plan Challenge:

Nearly everyone in Palm Beach County works and work begins at an early age. To be realistic about the needs of the County's people, the Palm Beach County Education Commission must and will seek to prepare *everyone* to successfully enter the workforce, to integrate workforce preparation with the K-20 system, to identify realistic job opportunities and to constantly and flexibly match lifelong workforce preparation with changing job opportunities.

A. High wage and high demand occupations within the 16 national industry cluster groups have been identified to establish career academy programs in comprehensive high schools across Palm Beach County. Targeting a student's interest and working with their learning style, a rigorous and relevant curriculum will help students be prepared to enter the workforce and/or attend post secondary school directly from high school. This is a multi-year collaborative partnership.

Palm Beach County Education Commission in partnership with the Business Development Board, Junior Achievement, Palm Beach Community College, the School District of Palm Beach County, Workforce Alliance, 4 year colleges and technical schools and local businesses.

B. A Comprehensive Career Development Plan is currently being developed. Key components are integration of academic and vocational coursework, strong emphasis on reading through the content area, career exploration, broad transferable skills and data driven decision making. Career counseling, including direct assessment, planning and course selection is critical. Dr. Willard Daggett of the International Center for Leadership in Education conducted community informational outreach seminars and is assisting in the curriculum and staff development. This is a multi-year collaborative partnership.

Palm Beach County Education Commission in partnership with the Bell South, Business Development Board, Centex Rooney, Children's Services Council, Morganti Construction, Song and Associates, the School District of Palm Beach County, and Workforce Alliance.

C. Additional information was needed to determine how to better prepare students for careers. Focus group research was conducted with school guidance counselors to determine: how guidance counselors define career education; what guidance counselors know about career education and what guidance counselors perceive career education includes. The findings are being used to redefine the role of the school counselor and develop appropriate training to provide effective career counseling. This is a multi-year project.

Palm Beach County Education Commission in partnership with Florida Atlantic University and the School District of Palm Beach County.